

Laurie Leshin, Ph.D. NASA GSFC Deputy Director for Science and Technology



Dr. Laurie Leshin is the deputy director of the Goddard Space Flight Center and also holds the post as the deputy director for Science and Technology.

Leshin joined NASA in August 2005 as the director of the Sciences and Exploration Directorate.

Leshin came to Goddard from Arizona State University in Tempe, where she was The Dee and John Whiteman Dean's Distinguished Professor of Geological Sciences, and the director of the Center for Meteorites Studies.

Dr. Leshin is a cosmochemist with a particular interest in deciphering the record of water in objects in our solar system. She has more than 15 years experience in conducting research in Antarctica and performing quantitative analyses of extraterrestrial rocks in the laboratory. A primary part of her research involves using meteorites from Mars to assess the history of water and the potential for life on the red planet.

To follow up on that quest, she is a member of two science teams on the 2009 Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) mission, including as a co-investigator on the Sample Analysis at Mars (SAM) experiment. SAM, led by Goddard Principal Investigator Paul Mahaffy, is the most sophisticated instrument to be sent to Mars since Viking and will allow us to trace the volatile and organic constituents in rocks and soils on Mars.

She has collaborated on 26 published scientific papers, and she played a major role in ASU's Astrobiology Program where she worked to understand the formation of life's precursor molecules on asteroids. She directed research, education, and curation activities in the ASU Center for Meteorite Studies, which houses the largest university-based meteorite collection in the world.

She recently completed service on President Bush's Commission on Implementation of United States Space Exploration Policy, a nine-member commission charged with advising the president on the execution of his new vision for American Space Exploration announced in January 2004.

She received her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry at Arizona State University, and her doctorate in 1994 from the California Institute of Technology.

NASA honored Leshin in 2004 by awarding her the Distinguished Public Service Medal, the highest award for non-NASA personnel. Among her other awards are the first Dean's Distinguished Professor in the ASU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and in 1996 she was recognized as the first recipient of the Meteoritical Society's Nier Prize, which is awarded for outstanding research in meteoritics or planetary science by a scientist under the age of 35. The International Astronomical Union recognized her contributions to planetary science with the naming of asteroid 4922 Leshin.